

REWRITE



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DO YOU KNOW WHAT FICTION REALLY IS?

Having read many thousands of fiction msa., it occurs to me that the great majority and general run of inexperienced writers do not have any clear idea of what fiction is. As a matter of fact, if one reads many popular magazines today, he might well get the idea that a large number of professional writers & editors also are none too certain regarding what constitutes a story. There are inevitably many variations because fiction serves editorial purposes that range from separating advertisements to providing time-consuming entertainment and the dramatization of a philosophy of life or an adult problem, the outgrowth of complex human relationships.

Yet there are certain basic fundamentals. If writers read all types of fiction objectively and try to observe the common similarities, a universal and timeless pattern—which varies very little from one generation to another—will emerge with ever increasing clarity. This is because human beings (readers), who are the ultimate consumers, alter radically in their surface tastes, customs, etc., yet remain basically the same species with the same primitive and instinctive intellectual and emotional traits and drives. The package is different, but the product a writer sells is the same. This can be easily proved by any literary archeologist, who will be glad to show that the Greek & Roman audiences laughed at the same jokes and enjoyed almost the same plots as do our readers today. Television will present problems as a new medium, but the stories will be the same.

What then, are some of the eternal characteristics of fiction? First of all, it is a world of drama. Dramatic narrative is radically different from plain homespun "prose" narrative. This is one of the hardest things for the "new" writer to learn. He goes to a great expenditure (waste) of time and energy to try to avoid the implied obligation of scenes. The inexperienced writer will grant his characters unlimited time in which they may sit and daydream (reflect) about a situation. He himself will intrude usually and getting between the reader and the characters, will explain endlessly why and how a situation must necessarily unfold. Yet drama is the essence of fiction. Whatever else may be your purpose or reason for telling a story, if you undertake to do it in terms of "fiction", you have promised a dramatic story—hence it is up to you to come through.

I have said that fiction is a "world". It is a living world. Each time you write even a short short story, it is necessary for you to create a little world of illusion, a living world of the story present. The reader, and this is important, the reason for every move you make, wants to identify himself in the main character. He wants to forego himself and his own experience for a time. He

wants to live vicariously an experience of a substitute personality. Call it escape, fantasy or what you will, it is a normal purifying experience for any reader. But it requires two things of every author. (1) Your little world of illusion must come alive in the mind of the reader. (2) Your characters must live in their own right. You must give them the right to move and have their being in themselves. They must not be puppets you trundle from place to place.

This is very important to remember because it sets up certain technical demands on you and it explains why although men has continually been discovering new and occasionally more effective media, the art of the storyteller has remained essentially the same. If you doubt me, listen objectively to a really good story-teller the next time you hear one telling a story and holding an audience intently. There is no formula for "telling" a story effectively. "Slant" in the ordinary sense of the word is unimportant, because a good story-teller can satisfy the reader of any specialized magazine. I have seen this done repeatedly. But there are a variety of trade practices that help you immensely.

One of these is to concentrate your spotlight on a single character and on a single problem of that character's life. Somerset Maugham has stressed the necessity of a line of interest running through a story and advancing rapidly with heightening interest.. Well, a single character and a single problem, conflict or decision, these are ingredients that are vital in building an effective single line of interest. There isn't a bit of harm in being obvious, if you achieve clarity and force. Gradually you will learn to be more subtle. In this factor lies what probably is the great paradox of fiction. No human being's life is as simple or transparently clear as a really good story. But you create the illusion of reality by being artificial. It is the province and the fascination of fiction that it allows us to tear a single thread from the complex weave of all living things and follow it consistently. In this process we increase our knowledge, our understanding of the gentle art of living & by so doing, gain more pleasure from everyday experiences.

Part of the trick of holding your spotlight on a single character and a single problem, is to tell your story from a single angle. A reader is perfectly agreeable to viewing the character from the inside, from the angle of an observer, who may be participating in the story or just watching it, or the angle of a god looking down on the scene from above. A story may be more vivid if you let the MC or observing character tell it first hand as an "I", or again partial or total omniscience, perhaps, can make it more emotionally meaningful. The great point, however, is to get singleness of purpose and emotional impact. Make it real, make it live, make it clear!

REWRITE

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FIND AND	William E. Harris,	KEEP
WRITE	Elva Ray Harris,	AMERICA
THE TRUTH	Editors.	FREE

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WHOEVER WINS, LET'S CLEAN HOUSE

Now as we approach a national election in the fall is a good time to take a real look at the way our free democracy works. While the politicians seek votes let the rest of us try to be as statesman-like as we can. Every man-made institution or organization should be reviewed and periodically improved. Laws need to be codified and outworn ones retired. Government departments and procedures of other days should be streamlined. The Hoover Commission plans are a step in the right direction. But only a step. More need to be taken.

The most obvious trouble with our governments today, and this applies to city, state and national governments, is size. They've all become too sprawly, cumbrous and complex for most untutored citizens to understand or manage. The result is they offer a field day for exploiting politicians and blocs desiring to apply pressure for special gain. The old opportunities for town meeting free discussion is largely gone. Too much is accomplished by hand-picked committees. Simplification and sharpening of the issues so that general interest on the part of the electorate increases, is clearly necessary.

Another very bad factor that needs immediate improvement is the tendency in all our governments now to spend first, then, and then only, to consider the matter of how to raise and appropriate, or transfer from available funds. Under such a system the voter is always the sucker. His representatives get to think he can always be whipped and taxed for another million or so. So long as there's no relation between desired appropriations and how much there actually is on hand that can be spent, no government can possibly develop a business-like or truly democratic budget. The real interests of the people disappear in the rush of special groups to benefit and create a patchwork mess of debt.

Most of these defects in our governments, unfortunately are a result of the way we elect our representatives. No two states use the same procedures to elect a president. It is not the mud and muck of politics so much that keeps good men from running as it is a crazy-quilt method of letting two major political parties dominate the polls and hand pick their candidates. The men we vote for in November were largely selected by the party workers much earlier. The electorate therefore can only vote for the lesser of two evils for the most part. It is an accident of history largely when good men rise to the top.

Here in Lunenburg this spring in the pre-primary election the dominant Republican Town Committee offered a hand-picked list of candidates to fill its membership. There were no alternative selections, yet those candidates who then were elected will send representatives to the State and National Republican Conventions, where candidates, offices, and platforms will be discussed and parceled out. The prospect of voting for this important pre-primary slate was so inviting it attracted 103 voters out of about 2,200 who are registered in our small town. To put it mildly that is a national disgrace. It was not considered amusing in Lunenburg.

Real leaders are always a minority group. But much of our trouble today is caused by a universal disinterest and lethargic negligence save when some unusual personality or issue creates a sense of dramatic conflict, or urgency. Most people disapprove the confused and unbusiness-like state of our communal affairs. But they shrug it off with a stock sigh. "What can I or anyone do?" Yet that is the way our priceless liberties are siphoned off and year by year eroded.

Almost everyone in his right mind agrees: (1) that Government costs far too much; (2) that there is enormous waste, and often very unwise and uneconomical use of the billions snatched from the taxpayers' pockets; and (3) that whether we have a welfare state or not, the strength, character and integrity of our citizens is being sapped by continued expansion of an "I can do it for you cheaper" policy by assorted swollen governments. It is indeed time for a real change.

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SUSPENSE WILL HOLD THE READER

Suspense is one element that most writers fail to get enough of in their stories. Yet it more than any other single factor snares and holds a reader. Nor is it limited merely to fiction. A couple of our neighbors in a sidewalk discussion the other day, told us how they had been reading Commander Hilsberg's book about rescue work on the various U. S. Navy submarines that sank off Provincetown, Portsmouth, N. H., etc., a few years ago. It was a pleasure to see their eyes light up, a tone of excitement creep into their voices. "That's a book you can't lay down," one declared.

It's a truism that if you can make anything you write so interesting intellectually, or emotionally that a reader cannot lay it down, you have accomplished something. But a mere intellectual or emotional interest alone is not enough. There must be the positive pull of an itching, nagging suspense, which won't let the reader alone until he has satisfied it. He simply must know how the story ends. This is not entirely a matter of materials, the characters you choose and the life they lead. Many inexperienced writers think that if they get the right plot, the story tells itself. That is not true. One of the reasons why some authors are paid large sums is because they have a skill in arranging scenes that are dramatic and carry a high degree of suspense. They place the scenes in an order that makes for suspense.

Let me give you an example. Suppose a man is seen holding a gun on another man. After a violent argument, which reveals nothing about the difference existing between them or reasons for the quarrel, the man with the gun shoots the other. That is exciting drama, I grant you, but it won't hold many readers.. But let us rearrange things a bit. Give the reader a scene showing a returning soldier, for instance, going home. He shows his buddies that he is desperately in love, and is looking forward to a good job that is going to give him a wonderful professional opportunity to do a project that will benefit all humanity. But in the next scene we see that the girl is in love with the other man. The scene discloses that the second man is content to sneak out of the draft and not play his part in defending his country. The soldier fights desperately to win back his girl. But he discovers the second man has not only let the country down, but has played the slick double-crosser on him and the girl he loves. The scene of the shooting comes next and there is considerable suspense, because we know that if the soldier shoots the man, thereby committing murder, he will lose both his golden opportunity, and also the girl.

But we can yank the situation up tighter. Suppose we give the soldier a real girl who remains true to him. Suppose we imagine him to be not a common soldier, but an important official in post-war Germany or Japan. Let's

kick the story around until in some way the first girl and man (the ones we had in that previous plot) are smooth lures or spies. It is all a fantastic plot to make the official commit a murder and thus destroy himself. His usefulness to himself and his government will be thrown away, if he is enticed so as to make a fool of himself. The reader knows all this. So, now the unrolling of the final scene becomes intolerable to the reader. He sits on the edge of his chair, feels like screaming to warn the hero of his danger. A melodramatic, corny plot? Sure, but it will give you the general idea.

That makes me think of something. Lots of writers handle their stories too gingerly. A plot must sell or it is no good. Not enough writers plot for the sake of loosening up a few mental muscles. Yes, I know all about a need for money-come-soon, and a dislike for wasting time. But until you get down to the earthy job of fiddling with ideas and characters, you really don't know what plotting is. It is easy enough to start a plot, then see that it is no good and throw up a hand. Have you really explored the whole of a plot and found the "meat" under the not-so-good, apparently worthless exterior? Have you ever taken a series of scenes and played with them, seeing what happens when you reverse, alter, or change the viewpoint and emphasis? That's the way professionals dream up their stories that sell.

Suspense occurs because one of two situations arises. Either you put your hero into such a predicament that (1) the reader's in a dither to see something happen; or he's in a different kind of dither because he is afraid that the wrong thing will happen. It always works, whichever way you play it. Do you remember how your heart has ached, fearing that Joe Dubbes won't get the girl? And do you recall those old fashioned melodramatic tales where your heart almost stopped, because you were afraid the train wouldn't be really flagged in time while hero Bingo was still tied to the track? One fear is "positive", the other "negative" so far as advancing the plot. But both are good for a heart-throb, if made to look sincere enough.

"Made to look sincere enough." That's the key to the whole thing. We might as well admit that what we do with words is artificial and make-believe. But if we do it well, ably enough, it stirs a reader and can even have a profound effect on real life. Who can say that the imaginary stories we all have read as children, have not shaped our ideals and outlook on life? And does not this cause us to do things, which in turn shape life for ourselves and others? What it amounts to is that we "tease" readers by making them feel something intensely that looks real, but is not. It is a trick done with mirrors. Readers, however, wish, nay, ardently desire to be thus teased. And we have a wholesome effect on their lives by doing this. Suspense is the strongest possible way of doing it.

FUNDAMENTALS OF GOOD POETRYBy Elva Ray HarrisTHE POET'S WORKSHOP

The poem for discussion this month:

JOHNNY-JUMP-UPSBy Eunice C. Neely

Johnny-jump-ups' saucy faces
 Peer from unexpected places:
 They are in the rockery, in the bed,
 In the pathway where we tread;
 They scatter seed right in the grass
 To smile at people as they pass.
 Pert little faces, full of fun,
 Flirting with rain and winking at sun
 Are tempting me; I want to play,
 But I must cut the grass today!

Following our usual custom we'll start by giving the poet a lift, though all comments are submitted in a spirit of friendly helpfulness.

Grace Scott: The poem has a charming air, a fresh pixie quality, and a liveliness that is good for a child's poem.

Olive Boynton: The perfectly rhymed, easily remembered couplets would appeal to a child. After one reading she would be chanting the poem. I can hear her!

Mary S. Thomas: Simple and full of pictures. Good sound effects.

Clarence C. Adams: It's a jolly thought that plays along until all of a sudden, a duty is recalled. It is like the bursting of a bubble. A dream that has disappeared and left stark reality.

Bessie H. Hartling: A gay little springtime poem. One can just see the Johnnies everywhere. The eighth line is best.

Ruth John: A fine picture.

Hylah R. Bender: Delightful and true to life. Children would love it.

Madeline G. Salmon: A joyful poem with a delightful twist in the last line.

Mary A. Fallon: I can almost hear the sigh at the end of the poem as some young person starts pushing a lawnmower.

Now—the helpful suggestions:

Grace Scott: The child who is old enough to handle a lawnmower might not appreciate unnatural personification.

Lily D. Pearce: In the first part of the poem, I see a little boy fascinated by the lit-

tle faces, wishing he could linger and make believe they were his playmates. Then in the 8th and 9th lines an older child seems to be talking—the grass must be cut and he is afraid he might cut off some of the dear little faces.

Mary Billings: Would a child of the age to which this poem appeals be strong enough to cut grass?

Rhythm:

Mary Billings: The third line gives an unpleasant jolt to the metrical pattern established by the first two lines.

Mary S. Thomas: Too bad that "They are" has to spoil the skipping rhythm. Why not omit them? By replacing the semicolon at the end of line 2 with a dash,

In the rockery, in the bed

would fit smoothly.

Bessie H. Hartling:

Tangled in rockery, tumbled in bed
 Blocking the pathway wherever we tread

Madeline G. Salmon:

From rockery, from flower bed

Julia Anna Cook: The rhythm in a child's poem should be as simple as possible, so think Mrs. Neely should stick to the trochee, as in lines one and two. For lines 7 & 8 would suggest to smooth the meter:

Pert, small faces, full of fun,
 Drinking rain, reflecting sun.

Bessie H. Hartling:

Pert, comic faces, brimful of fun.

Madeline G. Salmon:

Their little faces full of fun
 That flirt with rain and wink at sun

Cleon Marquis: The best shifts from iambic to trochee to anapaestic, all in ten lines. The accent occurs several times on weak words such as "in".

Mary A. Fallon: I wonder if so many changes in the rhythm do not interrupt the smoothness too much. However, this may have been done purposely to give the feeling of capriciousness that the flowers provoke.

Hylah R. Bender: A bit irregular as to pattern, as using feminine rhyme words in the first two lines and no repeat. Also trochee feet, iambic and anapaests begin the lines. Perhaps she planned this since the flower is apt to be erratic, too?

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Elva: These are all good revisions. Note the pictures (lines 3 & 4) Mrs. Hartling's revision evokes. Madeline Salmon gets in the desirable information as to what kind of bed. Mrs. Cook's (lines 5 & 6) is a good trochaic revision. Mrs. Salmon's a good iambic. Mrs. Hartling's--iambic with two variations. Too many, perhaps, and yet "brimful" carries so much more meaning than "full," and "comic" so much more than "small". Perhaps with a little more thinking we could retain those words & also smooth the meter.

Smiling Seed -- Cut Grass:

Grace Scott: I'm startled at a smiling seed! I wonder, too, if the rueful, perhaps even a bit self-pitying tone of the last line might not have been a mark against it with editors?

Olive Boynton: A child might be confused by the figure of speech...seed...smile, Johnny-jump-ups being active, spreading, run-away plants. I wonder if she could use something along these lines: (since she is personifying the blossoms anyway)

Trooping gaily through the grass
They smile at people as they pass.

Or does this personify them beyond the mood and meaning of the poem?

Mary Billings: Not the faces, but the seed pods which follow scatter the seeds.

Mary S. Thomas: Lines 5 & 6 should be omitted. Seed time comes later. Attention now is on the flower faces. The new flowers which will "smile at people as they pass" will not appear until next year. That, too a child, is a long time. And is not there a suggestion implicit (when one has read the entire poem) that whatever flowers do smile "in the grass" will have to be cut down? Omission of these two lines would produce an 8 line poem of 4 couplets, complete and compact.

But if the lines were to stand, I would omit the word "right." It is unnecessary and seems to talk down to the child. Line five might read:

They drop their seed into the grass
And smile...

Drop and smile then become acts of the flowers. Otherwise smile is an act of the seeds.

Julia Anne Cook:

Dropping seeds right in the grass,
Gladdening people as they pass

Madeline G. Salmon:

They grow from scattered seed in grass
To smile at people as they pass

Elva: More good revisions. Olive Boynton's

and Madeline Salmon's have the advantage in that the accents fall more naturally.

Line 9:

Jac Tweton: Seems divided too sharply.

Elva: Although pauses within lines in children's poems are not advisable, a pause that occurs in the middle of a line is sometimes effective. Since it breaks the rhythm halfway, it is less of a variation than the line that breaks near the beginning or end.

Madeline G. Salmon:

are tempting me to stop and play

Word Choice:

Madeline G. Salmon: Words are simple as they should be.

Grace Scott: I believe it's the language (although it seems simple, it is still not quite child language) which may have caused rejections. "Peer", "rockery", "tread" and "tempting" are not in a child's usual everyday speech. In fact, they are nearly archaic. There is a poem here but it needs clarifying, possibly shortening. Perhaps should concentrate on tiny tot approach.

Olive Boynton: Possibly if the first line of the second couplet were phrased more naturally, the "where we tread" of the second line would have a fresher sound.

Mary S. Thomas: "Rockery" sounds a bit bumpy, but should probably be left, since it puts the Johnny-jump-ups in their natural setting. "where we tread" seems added only to fill in the line and rhyme. "Tread" is somewhat archaic. "Saucy", "peer", "pert", "flirting" "winking" give the poem a pixie quality.

Unexpected Places:

Mary Billings: Author says unexpected places, then mentions rockery and bed, where flowers would usually be.

Grace Scott: Have the unexpected places be really unusual, something to stir a pleased giggle in a child.

More Ideas:

Mary Billings has sent in a list of stimulating suggestions for developing the subject in different ways:

(1) Make it a story poem, first person, and tell three different specific places Johnny surprised you by peeking out at you (you being a child).

(2) Try for a bit of humor: give Johnny a dewdrop or raindrop in his eye. Or a fuzzy bumblebee tickling him.

(3) Try an altogether different rhyme pat-

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tern—a longer or shorter line.

(4) Make a list of vivid descriptive words, which apply to Johnny-jump-ups and use some of these for first words of lines, and some for last or rhyming words.

Title:

Mary A. Fallon: It is fitting, and the poem carries it out.

Madeline G. Salmon: Right for a child's poem.

Lily D. Pearce: The old fashioned name for pensies makes a good title.

Clarence G. Adams: I would prefer a different title. How about "Temptation" or "Spring Fever"?

Markets:

CHROMATONES, BLUE MOON, The POESY BOOK, FAMILY FEATURES Page of the C.S. MONITOR, STAR-LANES, family magazines, and many children's magazines both secular and religious.

A NEW GROUP OF WORKSHOP CONTRIBUTORS!

We extend a cordial welcome to a new group of Workshop contributors. As an experiment in providing an outlet for gifted children, the Lunenburg Elementary School (Billy goes there to fifth grade) offers a class in creative writing. It's an elective for sixth-graders. I visited one day and listened to Mrs. Kileen Maloney and her alert youngsters in a most interesting and stimulating workshop session. As a class project they have entered our Workshop. Their comments on Mrs. Neely's poem follow:

Barbara Werkowski: Just what you would think of on a warm sunny day. The rhythm is smooth and the words are phrased so that you get a warm feeling inside.

Pamela Reida: I do not care too much for the 3rd or 4th lines or the 7th or 8th lines. I also do not care for its rhythm.

Sarah Lizotte: The poet uses interesting expressive words. I like the ending very much.

Ann Fuller: It has a surprise ending which makes the poem more interesting.

Kenneth Lord: Shows the author likes flowers. She has a nice thought in mind.

Betty Palonen: The 3rd line is too long compared with the 2nd, even though the 3rd and 4th are the same length. It describes the flowers very well, where they are found and what they do.

Janice Hansberry: A smooth and even rhythm which is not monotonous.

Douglas Riikonen: The 3rd line would sound

better if "they are" were "they're."

Patricia Woehlke: The last line just fits in with what we have to do. I think this poem could be put to music.

Thomas Sutton: It is simple, but has a cute thought with a steady rhythm.

Carol Ann Revell: The idea of this poem is typical of a warm sunny day in spring while you are walking through the green woods and they pop out of the leaves on the ground.

Robert Makinen: It has rhythm and interesting words and expressions.

Linda Szociak: It is humorous and cheerful.

Linda Knight: It is very cute except for the fact that the rhythm of the 8th line doesn't seem to match the rest of the poem. Otherwise I consider its idea and rhyming beautifully young and gay.

We are grateful for so many independent opinions from a group so near to the age level this poem was written for. We can learn much from our audience, and we do not often come into direct contact with it. I am surprised to note how many of the comments are in agreement with suggestions of adult workshop members. This is heartening two ways—to find out that sixth graders are such good critics, and to have our adult opinions confirmed by an actual audience.

Visiting a second time, I asked the class the question that was in some of your minds. For what age-group is this poem? Mrs. Maloney pointed out that the words were on a sixth-grade level. The children indicated that they liked the personification of the flowers.

Next Time we will discuss humor. We have selected four poems instead of one. You may comment on any or all of them. Please use a separate sheet of paper for discussing each of the poems, so I can send your letters directly on to each author.

Naturally, I can't publish all of the gems of wisdom in this small space. Your own poems may treat any subject, any form. Deadline for comments and poems is August 6th. Send them earlier if you can, but send them, anyway. The author will get the comments that arrive too late for inclusion in the Workshop, and of course also the others.

Workshop Reminder:

Remember: to submit a poem for discussion, you must send a comment on the other fellows work. That is your only ticket of admission. We welcome both comments and poems. Though it is vacation time, let us really find out what makes a poem funny. Don't forget to enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelop.

The first two authors need no introduction

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to Workshop members. Both have contributed poems before. Miss Durand's poem has been to a dozen light verse markets without success. I don't know the history of Mrs. Salmon's.

THE HERON

By Gertrude Durand

Immobile on the yellow sands
Bordering the sea
The stately heron contemplates
Blue infinity;
Considers with impassive calm
An ancient, mystic truth,
Like a god who never knew
Infancy and youth.

Let not appearances deceive.
Every thought and wish
Of this profound philosopher
Is centered on a fish.

FOR THE BRIDE AND GROOM

By Madeline G. Salmon

Someone should write a wedding song,
A hymeneus deft and stately,
All in dactylic dimeter;
I would myself, but lately,

With floors to wax and socks to mend,
Diapers to rinse and dishes;
With all these marriage adjuncts...
I just say, "All good wishes."

POWER

By Ruth John

When I was young, sixteen or so,
I went out riding with my beau,
in a beautiful new buggy, bow on whip
and the frisky bay went clop-de-clip.
We had for power just one horse,
and that was quite enough of course.
But now a girl goes out on a date
in latest car, and boy to rate.
Two hundred horsepower, or much more
it takes to haul them to the shore.
She weighs no more than I did then,
so why the power, I "dinna ken."

Mrs. John is a retired nurse who wrote as a school girl, and who has taken up writing verse again since retirement. Last year a poem won for her a scholarship to the Philadelphia Regional Writers' Conference. "Power" was written for our Workshop.

UNTITLED LIMERICK...

By Kenneth Lord

A robber broke into a store,
He took fifty bucks, maybe more;
But the storekeeper saw him,
And put the law on him;
So he's in for five years, maybe more.

Kenneth Lord, a member of the sixth grade creative writing class I visited, wrote his limerick for that class. Here is our chance to guide a brand new poet, help set his feet on the right path. He wants our help, but do not forget how important encouragement is at this point, too.

BOOKS FOR POETS AND OTHERS

Henrik Ibsen's PEER GYNT. Translated by Dr. Horace M. Finney. Philosophical Library. \$3.75. Edvard Grieg's lovely music is so often played for its own sake, one frequently forgets the dramatic poem for which it was composed. Dr. Finney, a member of the WCS Family, has written a refreshingly lively modern translation. I think Ibsen, a perfectionist where dialogue is concerned, would have approved the sparkling, dramatic lines, varied rhymed couplets that, free enough to allow full play of speech and emotion, seldom twist the meaning. Dr. Finney's brief preface displays his discrimination and sets the mood of the translation. (W. E. H.)

SHOWBOAT'S COMING. Adele & Cateau deLeeuw.. The World Publishing Co. \$2.75. A new novel for youngsters, 12 to 16, by sisters teamed as writers many times before; Adele writing and Cateau illustrating, they have published separately and together. This time they collaborated in the writing. An authentic & lively background of college students showboating on the Ohio River during summer vacation. Many kinds of people come alive.

THE MAGIC MENU. Ellen Hummel Robertson. Borden Publishing Co., Los Angeles. 60¢. A brochure outlining a method of dieting for the weight reduction so necessary to many older persons. It attempts to do this without the usual counting of calories, and without going hungry. Results are proof of the "pudding."

SOME TIMELY MARKET REPORTS

YANKEE, Robb Sagendorph, Dublin, N. H. Articles and usually one story not over 2,000 words. Photographs or drawings desirable. A little poetry, humor, "in fact, almost anything about the New England scene that would interest the general reader. (Mr. Sagendorph is scheduled to speak at the Maine Writer's Conference, as the deLeeuw sisters are scheduled at the Clark University Conference.)

HIGHLIGHTS FOR CHILDREN, Garry Cleveland Myers, 968 Main St., Honesdale, Pa. Although we cannot give the details at this time, we have been informed of important progress in this magazine for the benefit of writers. It now has a circulation of 150,000 readers. Mr. Myers is a member of the WCS Family.

Clerk University Writers' Conference. Bill is co-director again. July 12-14th. A great staff and a chance for personal conferences with members. Address us here—quick.

SOME FIGURES THAT DO NOT ADD UP

We received a circular letter from an advertising agent recently. He wanted to sell our free lance mss. at a fee about the same as those generally used by members of the Society of Authors' Representatives. But his clincher was one that made me leary of him. He said that 85% of all material used by editors is purchased through agents. Editors depend on agents to do the first reading for them. Why then waste time and money submitting mss. to editors? An engaging argument if you consider it sound. I don't.

Unfortunately, that kind of thesis is for the lazy writer who wishes to sidestep what is a head-ache: the digging for markets. It is only true that agents may handle "85% of the mss." submitted to the larger markets. It is not true that agents fill the demands of the hundreds of smaller secondary magazines and newspapers. Most of the religious press and magazines, the juvenile field, and many specialized markets are untrod, and untillied fields for agents. This is because mostly they are just not profitable enough to be worth working.

Yet this agent's figures notwithstanding, these markets are probably worked by 75% of all free lance writers! The parttime ones.

Most agents except in rare instances will not handle writers who are making less than \$200 per sale, & don't do it more regularly & repeatedly than most inexperienced writers. The economics are simple: they want a minimum commission of at least \$20 and a regular and fairly dependable income in exchange for the energy required to promote a promising, but not yet established writer. You cannot blame them; selling, not writing, is primarily their profession. They must limit their attention and devotion to a fairly small number of writers if they are to preserve high personal integrity.

There is accordingly an irreducible minimum of writers, who must always dig up markets for themselves, at least until they become profitable enough for agents to handle. It is only fair to state that a very considerable number of successful authors succeed in managing their own business affairs satisfactorily and never hire agents. Presumably these write most of the 15% of mss. editors do not buy from agents.

Although we as WRITERS' COUNSEL SERVICE do not claim to be agents, we do fill the void to some extent for writers who aren't yet a profitable risk for agents. We counsel writers individually and suggest markets. Over the years we have helped writers to sell to practically every type of market, including the top slicks. At best we & other responsible services and teachers can train only a small minority of the writers needing counsel.

SELLING IS SERIOUS BUSINESS

In an adv. for a salesmen's manual I noted these selling pointers; all applicable to writers:

(1) Don't Sell the Steak...Sell the Sizzle!

Put the color, the sound and taste of the idea into your story. Give the sensory, the emotional stimulations, and project them so the reader really feels and reacts to them.

(2) Don't Write. Telegraph!

Your first ten (10) words are vital if you want to make a sale. You have to put points across quickly, concisely and with a verbal impact. Make the reader exclaim: "This is a great 'story'. I want to read it."

(3) Say It With Flowers!

Do you dramatize your product? Act out an idea. Prove with anecdotes, scenes that your reader remembers, yes, can't forget. Whether you are writing a poem, an article, story or biography, document it with awareness born of perceptive observation & knowledge.

(4) Say It With Vini!

Sweep your reader off his feet with every bit of energy, ingratiating charm and enthusiasm you can command. "Infectious" is a horrid, overworked, trite cliché used mostly by amateurs. But when you're selling and it is important for you not to score a miss, just be as infectious as you can. Start a plague and infect each and every one of your readers with your own enthusiasm for your message.

(5) Don't Ask If, Ask Which!

There must be no such word as "no" in the lexicon used by your reader. Give him no alternative, but to approve your ms. This is especially important with respect to all of the editors you confront. Know their "book" better than they do. Pick their brains. Eliminate every possible rejection factor, & make your timing in presenting any given ms. as good and irresistible as you can.

You can't always be right, but you can always try. A lot more than most writers do. A writer who tops his competition in pains to please, is a tough man to defeat. Yesterday I read about a specialty dancer in Barnum & Bailey's Circus, who is a neighbor of ours. At eight years of age she kept sneaking into the Whalom Summer Playhouse. The ushers grew tired of throwing her out, so the manager let her stay. At ten she was helping the actresses, later was head usher and then in the chorus and after that speaking lines. Do you see what I mean? Selling is serious business. You can't just shoe it off, or expect an agent to take it off your hands.

REWRITE

A PAGE OF MARKET COMMENTS

A matter affecting some writers is Canadian Finance Minister Walter Harris' proposal to tax Canadian editions of American magazines. (Not American magazines crossing the border.) It is aimed at ten magazines, particularly TIME and READER'S DIGEST. The argument is that it will protect Canadian magazines and channel adv. money into them. No editorial alarms have been raised in favor of this 20% tax, and many editors have opposed it.

Some figures of interest to writers selling to Canadian markets have been published in the newspapers. Ten years ago 70 Canadian magazines were in existence. Today the figure has risen to 103. Circulation has grown from 11,000,000 copies a month to about 18,000,000. And in 5 years adv. volume has also built up from a comparatively small base to a net gain of 60% of \$11,000,000 more than in 1951. Incidentally, TIME and RD have spent, it is estimated, more than \$10,000,000 alone in Canada.

The HIGHWAY TRAVELER, 71 W. Lake St., Chicago 1, Ill., has discontinued publication. All mss. are being returned by the Post Office, so don't waste the postage.

New York State Poetry Day, Korn Contest., Lane Van Hook, 154 Pearsall Dr., Mount Vernon, N. Y., is offering a \$100 cash prize a poem of any subject selected by the author, not exceeding 32 lines. All poets eligible. Deadline: Oct. 1, 1956.

WRITERS' NEWSLETTER, Box 251, Madison Sq. Station, NYC 10, suspended temporarily, in May due to illness of editor Jessye Russell, editor and publisher. She's back again now.

Articles May Have Reprint Value. The Jhan Robbins, slick magazine team, dug up an article about money management from their own children. It was published, then the Putnam Management Co., 60 Congress St., Boston 9, Mass. reprinted it as a booklet and mailing piece. It's free for the asking.

WISCONSIN POETRY Magazine, 1764 N. 83rd St., Wauwatosa 13, Wis., recently sent out a notice that because of the illness of the editor, Clara Catherine Prince, a delay inevitably must be expected in considering mss. submitted. It was signed by Margaret Lohren associate editor.

QUOTE, Maxwell Broke, Box 611, Indianapolis 6, Ind., is a readable little reprinter in digest form. Ideas, inspiration, jokes & the like for businessmen, speakers, etc. No original material used apparently. Weekly.

A Possible Poetry Market. Poets, have you ever thought of the possibility of marketing some of your verse on calendars? The thing to do is to consult some of the large print-

ing houses, the commercial printers specializing in business calendars. I received one calendar this year that used short verse on each page between the picture and the paired tabular months. It could be a novelty.

The Charles H. Sergel Drama Prize, University of Chicago, Faculty Exchange, Chicago 37, Ill. The 1957 \$1,000 prize contest is open to any citizen of the United States. Write for entry blank. Closes: Mar. 1, 1957.

Post Office Dep't. Information Service is lobbying for higher Postal rates with a circular showing that all postal employees' organizations favor this. The reason, not mentioned, is that postal employees expect another across-the-board pay raise, if higher rates are voted by Congress. This will naturally leave the matter of the Department's deficit exactly where it now is. Practically unchanged.

REWRITE believes mail-users should pay an equitable share of their portion of the postal deficit. This includes Congressmen, who have the right to use the mails free, & departments of the Government whose appropriations should include mail charges that believably are now included in the postal deficit. Postmaster James A. Farley alone took notice of this discrepancy by keeping a set of books that showed what other departments "owed" the Post Office.

REWRITE is against postal rate increases, because:

- (1) they will be used to grant higher wages not lower the deficit. In the past REWRITES editorials in favor of fair wages for postal employees have been commended by the men.
- (2) Some First Class mail is handled apparently economically by Air, but not required to pay Air mail rates.
- (3) The Post Office Dep't. no longer offers directory service, thus materially increasing the amount of mail that must be carried three or more times to achieve delivery. The postal users have to pay full rates for each of these additional handlings.
- (4) Small magazines not economically able to warrant Second Class privileges, are deprived of this type service and are treated as catalog and advertising booklets. As such they are pushed aside during the Christmas rush & their time value is materially destroyed. A treatment also accorded to Second Class magazines. Do two cent seasonal greeting cards requiring additional employees to handle them pay as full and equitable a share of the deficit? In all probability no.
- (5) The Post Office Dep't. is still permitting its service to be disrupted and delayed by so-called "householder" and "rural route patron" advertising matter. What is the deficit?

SOME MARKET NEWS AND COMMENT

CATS, Raymond D. Smith, 4 Smithfield St., Pittsburgh 22, Pa. A by-product of a sale of a poem by Elva to CATS brings us this magazine regularly on a gratis subscription. It is an interesting publication directed primarily at cat-lovers. Uses pictures and articles. Several of the latter: practical experience stuff mostly from owners, often in a light and humorous vein. A number of pictures in the May issue showed cats frisking over typewriters. The cover always carries a striking cat picture. CATS offers \$25 monthly for the "Picture of the Month" and \$100 for the best cat picture of the year. A page of verse and a few selected prose quotes under the title, "Felines 'Bout Felines" is edited by Anne Metcalf. In May there were 10 poems. These included one by Ethel Jacobson, a contributor to the SAT. EVE. POST, Margie Zimmerman, and Beale Berg, a member of the WCS Family.

Future Market Analyses. In preparation for the 2nd Clark University Writers' Conference Elva has performed a labor of love by drawing up a selected list of 300 magazines and urging these to be represented by sample copies in our magazine display. Last year tremendous interest was shown in this display, and pounds of duplicate copies were carried home by the 73 writers who registered. So I would suggest if you are anywhere near Worcester, Mass. (July 12-14th) you stop by and take a look.

The LYRIC, Christiansburg, Va., recently celebrated its 35th birthday, according to a card we received from the editors. It's one of the oldest and most readable poetry magazines devoted to traditional poetry. Altogether it offers more than \$600 a year in prizes.

THE EDITOR IS ALWAYS RIGHT!

In the next column we have discussed that perennial problem of the creative criticism and comments about his work that almost every writer attracts from friends and neighbors. It cannot be said too often that good teachers and kind editors are only as helpful as the writer's ability to assimilate a piece of advice. If you haven't had the experience to see its value, it might as well be a stone in your path. When you are a naive young and inexperienced writer your approach to criticism is very different from, let us say, that of an imaginative or tired professional, and vice versa.

But here is another angle. Remember that a man or woman to whom you wish to sell something, is like the umpire in baseball. They always have the last word. They may make you mad, indignant or sorry for yourself. But you are selling them, not yourself. You can ignore them (and lose a sale!) or cuss them & achieve the same result. Or you can satisfy please them, or suggest something practical they recognize as good sense. Be smart!

CRITICISM IS WHAT YOU MAKE OF IT

A poet friend of ours wrote to us in distress the other day about the editor of one of the smaller verse magazines who pens her personal comments on the margins of the ms. she rejects. That almost reminds one of the paradoxical definition of news: "When a man bites a dog, that's news." It certainly has news value when an editor takes time to offer criticism. Most of them are blamed for a cold and impersonal rejection slip.

Seriously, I don't think an editor should ever mark up an original copy that a writer may want to send elsewhere. If an editor is anxious to help a writer to that extent the wise thing is to scribble her notes on separate pieces of paper. Or she could request the writers she wishes to communicate to to include a carbon copy. (Incidentally, most of the carbons we see are mighty poor copies of an original that may well be a cause of editorial eye strain. Often they are smudgey, or so pale and faded they cannot be read at night.)

I know a number of editors who are unusually kind and sympathetic to writers. But I think it is a question how far anyone ought to go in advising revision. Editors are experts in their own field, and probably have an experienced knowledge of their competing rivals. Some are wide readers with valuable ability to estimate the requirements of the magazines and publishers beyond their horizon. Quite a few have written or have served an apprenticeship teaching school. But I think the smart ones, who sometimes are the most inherently sympathetic ones, too, have a feeling that all criticism is basically a personal comment.

I have seen too many editors disagree. One tells you one thing and rejects, another is poignantly moved and accepts the same identical ms. Only in the broad general theories do they see eye to eye. Yet differing radically, they would probably be able to understand as few writers would, why each made a different decision. It all sums up into the fact that a writer should accept & be grateful for criticism wherever it comes from. In the final analysis, however, all such helps well intended though they may be, are only as you, the writer makes them, good or bad. If they open your eyes and you use them; or if you are ready for them, or analyze them exactly and practically, they will serve you. But if you grasp at each as a straw in this wind or that, they most certainly won't.

Miss Anne Pendleton, long a contributor to a wide variety of magazines and for years a member of the WCS Family, is seriously ill. Her daughter does not expect her to recover. Few of her many friends knew that she wrote under a severe handicap, and so was an example of unusual courage and perseverance for all the years she wrote.

REWRITE

NEW BOOKS FOR WRITERS

THE WRITER'S HANDBOOK. Ed. A. S. Burack. The Writer. \$5.00. A new edition of this handy, practical and very useful writers' tool. In addition to the seventy-nine articles written by experts on a wide variety of subjects connected with writing and selling, markets (1,000 of them) are listed. For all around reliability and use, we consider it the best of its kind. A WRITERS' BOOK CLUB Selection.

A MANUAL OF COPYRIGHT PRACTICE. Margaret Nicholson. Oxford University Press. \$6.50.. A completely revised Second Edition and the first guide to the major changes under U. S. Copyright Law to make it comply with the Universal Copyright Convention. An essential tool for writers, publishers, agents. Pains takingly thorough research by the head of the Contract and Copyright Dep't., The Macmillan Co. A WRITERS' BOOK CLUB Selection. Two Star recommendation.

THE BEST AMERICAN SHORT STORIES 1955. Ed. Martha Foley. Ballantine Books. 50¢. It is good to have this series in a paper back edition (hard cover edition also available.) While the NEW YORKER still dominates in the number of stories selected, it is healthy & salutary that one slick, the LHJ, and PRAIRIE SCHOONER, and some less familiar literary & experimental magazines receive recognition.

NEW SHORT NOVELS #2. Ballantine Books. 35¢. Novellas by Norman Mailer, John Phillips, Delphine Rainer (also a published poet), & Wallace Stegner. It is good to see a market being created for the off-trail story. Four experienced young writers feeling their way.

WRITING FOR THE RELIGIOUS MARKET. Ed. Roland E. Wolseley. Association Press. \$4.00. With its skilful editorial packaging and plentiful and well arranged market lists, this is a useful book. The editor stresses the fact that it is a counselling book rather than a specific "how to" book. Eighteen experts in as many departments do a pretty good job of covering almost every aspect of the subject imaginable. A WRITERS' BOOK CLUB Selection.

THE ART OF WRITING MADE SIMPLE. Irving Rosenthal & Morton Yerman. Made Simple Books.. \$1. A thorough and helpful book by an assistant professor of City College of N. Y. and a member of the Soc. of Magazine Writers. It covers news, feature and magazine articles, publicity, the short story and novel, dramatic writing. Contains a number of additional useful features, and specifically urges you not to risk the use of advertising "critic-agents". A WRITERS' BOOK CLUB Selection.

ESSENTIALS IN PROBLEM SOLVING. Zucc Kogan.. Arco Publishing Co. \$4.00. This book duplicates in a degree the awareness of logic few people study today. In an age of expanding, widening knowledge, it seeks to show how to use that knowledge efficiently. It does not replace it. A WRITERS' BOOK CLUB Selection.

NEW BOOKS OF GENERAL INTEREST

THE MAN IN THE IRON LUNG. Leonard C. Hawkins with Milton Lomask. Doubleday & Co. \$3.75. A very readable biography of Frederick Snite, Jr., who lived courageously in an iron lung for 18 years and enjoyed every minute of his grim experience. Hawkins, his attendant and close friend, has managed to be revealing & humorous, yet ever retain good taste.

HAPPY WARRIORS. Pamela Search. Arco Publishers, Ltd. \$2.75. This English book is a documentary one about the very wide horizon of the Salvation Army in meeting all kinds of human needs. The author is a young graduate of Oxford, experienced at 25 in the writing of tv and documentary films. Very readable.

THE ANGEL SPREADS HER WINGS. Maxine Garrison. Fleming H. Revell Co. \$2.00. This is a heartwarming inside feature story of "Angel Unaware" and how Dale Rogers came to write it. This one is not written by Dale. Miss Garrison is assistant publicity chief for "Roy Rogers' Enterprises". A workmanlike job. NO tear-jerker. She lets the story develop its own human emotional pull.

THE MANDARINS. Simone de Beauvoir. The World Publishing Co. \$6.00. The Prix Goncourt novel. Not all French prize books are notable. But this novel is a story of intellectuals, freed at last from four years of German occupation. It is a large novel, but a minute and rather compassionate study, universal in scope, of what happens to people's physical bodies, their minds, feelings and souls under the impact of war. The effects of intolerable pressures driving them to seek various escapes and expressions of resentments. A realistic, sexual book that also has ideas.

AN IMPORTANT DECISION

Early in April Harper & Brothers accepted a Consent Order from the Federal Trade Commission which requires the publisher to "stop contracts with book clubs which require retail price maintenance by retailers while the clubs which compete with them, are exempted from any such responsibility in the sale of their own licensed issues of the same book."

This could be a revolutionary step in the sale of books. It would end discrimination. The book clubs have thrived because of publishers' willingness to sell them rights to print special editions of a book at as much as 70% off the retail price. The bookseller has received varying discounts ranging from from as little as 20% to usually about 43%, the latter being for 500 or more copies. Obviously no bookseller could compete on this basis together with the massive editions of 100,000 or more copies.

Other publishers are involved and the matter may end up in the courts. But if it results in diminished bookclub sales, a few writers (mostly popular) will be hurt.

REWRITE

POT-BOILERS CAN SERVE A PURPOSE

Free lance writing has always been a precarious way of earning a living. Most of us have to be practical and budget a large portion of our time to the pot-boiling kind of articles and trivia that will bring in some immediate income. But it is a curious paradox that many would-be authors, who tell us that they "have to write," do not give much time to financing their avocation so it may eventually become a professional vocation.

On the other hand there are many would-be writers who refuse to invest a cent in this serious and highly competitive business until it begins to pay off for them. I know a great many writers who refuse to study at a good school of writing, or read books, subscribe to magazines and study the markets a writer must be familiar with if he hopes to earn checks. "When my writing begins to return me something for the time I put into it then I'll really work at it," they say. How many businessmen would found a business like General Motors if they followed that theory persistently and belligerently the way that many writers do?

Most of us have to start small. Most of us have very little money to spend on a dream. But if we are smart we can earn small sums. The difference between the kind of writers, the chip-on-their-shoulder, the writing-owes-me-a-living kind, who want writing to pay off, and the rest of us is that we know the world is not interested in whether we write or not. We know it is up to us to devise an ingenious way to earn the money that may be able to buy us time to write the good stuff we may have concealed in our heads.

There are really hundreds of ways to earn a few dollars lying around if one is eager, ambitious or desperate. And almost anyone—who can write ordinary good English, and is observant, with an added hunger to share his enthusiasms with his neighbors—can hit one or more of these pot-boiler markets. A raw and very green kid out of college, I landed a minor reviewing job and from there got my hand on opportunities to do free lance feature articles. A good feature article writer can almost always make a place for a lot of what he writes.

But a step below this lies the whole, wide field of filler writing. You may be a poet, or you perhaps have a knack for spotting the type of small items the C. S. MONITOR takes on its Family Features page which is issued six days a week. The MONITOR welcomes occasional contributors on many other pages, as a casual reading of its pages will show the ambitious writer. But other papers and magazines have quiz columns, recipes, humor, or many other space-filling, time consuming entertainment features. You may be able to devise a new one. The main thing is to write, write, write. And to think practically both in terms of writing and selling an editor..

For filler writing is very practical stuff.

Pot-boiling has many advantages and a few dangers. You should not do it too long, and become satisfied with its meager rewards. A person as he grows older loses his fluency. He has to push himself more and achieve his effects more through technique than enthusiasm. The latter is harder to summon up. But on the other hand he has greater experience and more to say. Pot-boiling can thus serve as an exerciser, a way to keep facility and writing skills. But it should serve only as means, not an end.

But in youth pot-boiling can be a way for an unknown to get his foot inside the door. It is one way to get paid while learning. A sale now and then can also be good for one's morale. It encourages you when you feel you are not getting anywhere. It can attract an editor's eye. And it certainly can prove to be a handle to one's name. When an editor is skeptical you can pull out your clips. Hell at least see that you can write, and so can afford to be more generous with his time.

As I watch writers who insist upon trying to make writing a form of seller's market, I sometimes wonder whether I would have beaten my brains against the closed door in the same way as these writers do. It takes courage and persistency. Writing is really, and always, a buyer's market. The editor has the final say. You must fill the holes he tells you are open, and by inference you have got to please him.

My plan of attack has always been accordingly to be ever on the watch for markets I am sure I can hit; to study these till I am positive I know what the editor wants; then and only then I try to be as fresh and original as I can within the editor's restricting limitations and aims. Not my limiting taboos. This way I have found again & again that editors say I can write well because I write their way. And in the long run it has been a good discipline that makes me a better writer my way, when I get the chance.

It seems to me that if pot-boiler writing does nothing else it teaches you to think in an editor's terms, and thus gives you a wider perspective or outlook. It certainly offers you a chance to mix with the world and place a measuring stick against your writing instead of spending perhaps years writing in an ivory tower where no one can see what is being written except the second readers who regretfully or not tuck in a rejection slip bearing the anonymous conclusion, "not quite our type."

Finally, pot-boiling can often be a useful way of achieving by-product chips from longer work: an article or research for a book. I have written hundreds of them in the comparatively short moments I could not use to write longer pieces. They have financed research for articles, and helped my morale.

REWRITE

IT PAYS TO READ WISELY

The story is told of the president of one of America's giant industrial firms who was looking for a younger man to succeed him. He selected a particular executive, and gave a rather surprising reason for his choice. He explained that this man "reads!"

A trade paper editor commented that it is obvious when a man reads wisely he is "constantly increasing his mental capital, thus fitting himself to attract more prosperity. Just as men in need of capital go to banks, so do people in need of mental capital visit libraries, buy books, and attend adult education training classes."

Writers can do a lot to enlarge their acceptances from editors by reading systematically. How does one do that? By reading in a number of categories. (1) They should become familiar with the best writing of contemporary writers in their own countries as well as the world over. They should read in the great storehouse of the classics. (2) They should have a good grounding in technical literature about their specialties, and the all around task of being a good writer. (3) They ought to know thoroughly the types, style, character and quality of whatever an editor publishes in book or periodical form.

That way they will cultivate their imagination, native talent and developed skills. They should unceasingly remember that practically every sight, sound and emotion that a writer exposes himself to can stimulate a reaction on his part. No experience is ever lost. And so a writer should not spread himself too thin, but neither should he fail to be always on the alert and to value himself as a capital investment on the material and spiritual levels.

TIME TO WIDEN YOUR VIEW

Summer is the time to stretch your wings, to reach out for new experiences. If you're smart, you can plan your vacation wisely to make it pay off in a number of ways. Perhaps you can gather material for those features, that you have always wanted to write, or do, let's say, some special background research for a short story or novel. Maybe you merely wish to experience a new pattern of life quite different from your own.

Don't try to work too hard at it. Build a reservoir of surplus energy. You'll need it for writing. Get out of your rut; break the fixed pattern of your life. Renew yourself. Store up new scenes, new ideas and emotions to write about. Fill your pitcher full.

Manufacturers Trust Co., International Banking Dep't., 55 Broad St., NYC 15, N. Y., is sending for the asking a "World Time Chart" showing the time differences in more than a 100 countries throughout the world as these differ from Eastern Daylight Saving time.

YOU CAN GET WHAT YOU WANT

Part of writing and selling is requiring, not only of yourself but of editors, too, the best you and they are capable of accomplishing. I run into this fact continually.

A poet friend of ours recently pointed up for us the low esteem in which verse publication in newspapers is generally held. She suggested that if more fine poetry and well known authors' names were seen in these columns, the more would the wider public read & appreciate poetry.

It seems to us there are more complicated issues involved. But it's certainly an important problem and one that those prominently concerned with Poetry Day promotion of real interest in poetry and verse might consider seriously. Some newspaper columns are merely paste-up columns which are allowed to feed the vanity of the same low grade poets year after year. Others do a very genuine service to Poetry. Their editors labor without recompense or much credit, yet achieve quality in appearance and content.

In the final analysis public apathy has a lot to do with this matter. And it is something of a vicious circle. Because no readers take an active interest and demand good verse, editors do not regard such columns as important. Thus they are allowed to deteriorate, & therefore only poor verse appears, and so the wider public foregoes reading of verse. Basically, this public is right that poetry is not good and offers nothing worthwhile.

But let an imaginative editor take over a column and put oomph into it. Readers begin to read and comment, better poets start contributing and the whole atmosphere commences to change. Elva has proved with her "Poetry Programs" wherein she makes poets come alive as ordinary human beings and then reads selected poems from memory, that Poetry has a stimulation even for persons who profess an active dislike for verse.

Obviously imagination all along the line, plus the energy to be articulate is required. It is not enough in this highly competitive age for poets to passively accept the markets open to them, or for readers to accept the wares that are offered to them. It is necessary to give voice to your appreciation and your need.

This does not mean artificial drum-beats, meaningless postcard votes for friends, and poor quality verse. It means on the contrary sensitivity, constructive thought, time and energy spent without thought of reward in a just cause. Not long ago a friend of ours had an erudite column shot out from under him in a quality newspaper. Without any suggestion from him the readers took over. More than 80 letters were received demanding that the column be restored. It was!

REWRITE

THE PROSE AND FICTION WORKSHOP

The "Fiction" Workshop attracted a wide selection of material this quarter. Problems, short ms., and one long short story. I feel that this is an excellent way to help a few writers individually and a lot more by discussing even briefly the common weaknesses, the sales rejection factors that keep writers from selling. Of course I cannot go in to detail regarding these matters. I do not have the time to handle a great deal of ms. on a free basis. But I am glad to help those willing to take part in the Workshop. If it does nothing more, this feature sets up the standards that writers everywhere should demand of critics from whom they seek professional help.

One writer submitted a short, specialized ms. that had been rejected by the UPPER ROOM. Of course one cannot speak categorically for an editor. But this ms. had two "strikes" against it. The phrase "Christmas is over" is a fairly limiting one that would exclude it from any but the first issue following that special holiday. Second, too frequent paragraphing plus the fact that the main body of the inspirational portion contained 3 questions each raising two alternatives may possibly have made the editor feel that emphasis was placed on the problem rather than on solving it. Otherwise the ms. was good.

Joe Tweton sent in a very good storiette. Nothing really wrong with it. The moral was a bit too obvious. This mean it ran down in interest. Two "he said" tags sounded a little labored. Example: "Rod Foster exclaimed exasperatedly as he plodded up the steps of his home." Actually, it was or seemed wordier—because the author wrote it, "....exclaimed as he plodded exasperatedly up the steps of his home." The last three words could be indicated more effectively by the action. In other words, be suggested rather than stated so patly. There was also confusion in one scene when a character who had been earlier called Junior was referred to as Rod, which is the name of the MC, who was active in the same scene. The reader had to stop to check, always a fatal weakness in a story.

Shelton McKean contributed a very amusing character sketch. Nothing very wrong with it either. Again, minor defects in style likely rejection factors. "Cosmetized," a striking word, could prejudice an editor, coming as it does in the second paragraph and easily visible on the left margin. Also, there is a dramatic scene, the climax of which is merely slid over, not cleanly developed. I mention these relatively minor details, for they are often what separates a selling ms. from one that an editor returns regretfully. Inexperienced writers do not attach sufficient importance to them.

Julia F. Polinski submitted an article in outline. She wanted to know why it would be

rejectionable. I think its biggest handicap is that offering general ideas everyone would agree to in principle and few actually use, it would be out of step with the readers. We live in an age of credit, but the author advanced the thought of thrift. Such an article would need to be handled lightly, as an amusing and humorous one, or as a deliberate challenge.

Especially it needs anecdotes. Real or imaginary true life experiences that appeared to be taken from life to prove the points. A writer can add a lot of interest by backing up her ideas with illustrative examples. The author had in mind to submit it to a large, national circulation magazine in the entertainment field. I think a better bet should be some of the family and service magazines read by women of moderate means, who handle the finances. It might be a good idea to offer both good and bad examples. Show how one woman got ahead and others got behind. Let the readers help to make the point of thrift themselves instead of being told to do it.

Mary A. Fallon followed up a suggestion I made to her about Ocean Park. Unfortunately she overlooked an important anniversary, an interesting news-peg that would help to sell the article. Also, slanting it for a special newspaper, she fell midway between the style of two different departments that might use it. It is always wise to study a market and imitate the general style and method of presentation. Of course within these limits an author tries to sell his own original ideas and special charm.

Nature studies or essays are rarely saleable in newspapers unless the author does an unusually good job in making the newsworthy. The opposite of a seashore place viewed during the winter, can be entertaining and interesting. It must not be written from the private viewpoint of the author or for special readers. The whole audience must be kept in mind.

The most ambitious ms. submitted was Julia Anna Cook's 5,000 word ms. Ordinarily, it is unwise for an inexperienced or unknown author to send such a long story to editors. A story must be extra good to win approval. It is better strategy to start short and raise wordage as you increase your sales. Her big problem, like many young writers is tighter writing and bringing out the color, building up the illusion of reality by telling the story more in terms of swiftly flowing action, rather than personal explanation by the author.

The relationships between the characters, and the background of an important fire are not as clearly presented as they should be. The reader has difficulty accepting them. A reader must participate fully to enjoy stories he reads. If a reader has to stop, and check back or add up, the story loses power.

REWRITE

Another weakness is that the sheer complication of the plot was over-stressed at the expense of characterization. This is something many writers let occur. The story has unusually good suspense, but one set of characters for whom sympathy is built up, turn out to be villains along with another pair. It would have been better not to duplicate because that always dissipates strength.

Next Time. This Workshop is your workshop and is intended to help as many writers and editors as possible. Send in your problems, questions and ms. But keep them brief! This is a writing lab or clinic where we discuss universal matters pertaining to the craft & profession of writing & selling. We cannot give extended or detailed personal training much as we would like to. By discussing the personal problem of one writer, we illuminate and clarify those of the many.

Deadline: August 1, 1956. The earlier the better.

NEWS OF AND ABOUT EDITORS

DOWN EAST. Duane Doolittle, Camden, Maine. "The Magazine of Maine." Material should be directly related. Little fiction, no poetry. Humorous anecdotes, \$5. Features, 2,000 and 3,000 words, \$35 to \$50. Photo stories about \$5 a photo with supporting text.

The GRAIL. Rev. Walter Sullivan, C. S. B. Family living, slanted to husbands & wives. Fiction, 3,000 words, articles, 2,000, with fillers, 500 words. Pays 2¢ minimum a word, on Acc. No poetry or cartoons. An excellent Contributors' sheet. Write: St. Meinrad, Ind.

The Charles W. Follett Award, 1000 Washington Blvd., Chicago 7, Ill. \$3,000 for the most worthy contributions to children's literature. Age groups: 8-12 & 12-16 years. May be original fiction or non-fiction. Opens: Jan. 1st annually and closes: July 1st.

Why not use competitions of this kind for an assignment? Give yourself a year to contribute a serious entry. You will have ms. other editors will wish to read.

Sydney A. Sanders, literary agent, has retired. Curtis Brown, Ltd., one of the largest non-advertising agencies is taking over her business.

Hans Stephen Santesson has replaced well-known Leo Margulies as editorial director at King Size Publications, 471 Park Ave., NYC 22. A lecturer on writing at CCNY, Santesson is former editor of Unicorn Mystery Book Club.

The Catholic Poetry Society's SPIRIT Magazine is now in its 23rd year of publication.

The AMERICAN SCHOLAR, of course, is edited by Hiram Haydon for the Phi Beta Kappa.

NEWS AT WCS HOUSE

By the time many of the WCS Family get to read this issue Bill and Elva are scheduled to be at the Phila. Regional Writers Conference. Bill is again serving as a consultant for those attending, helping them with personal writing and selling problems. It is a busy, stimulating conference with many discussion and lecture groups going on day and night simultaneously. We look forward to annual reunions with many of you, and meeting new writers and probably some recent additions to the WCS Family. It's well worth the trip to Philadelphia. A warm welcome is always waiting at the Bellevue-Stratford, the hotel where the Conference is held, and its temporary headquarters is set up.

REWRITE will be reaching you again tardily for a variety of reasons. Bill's class at Clerk University this spring was an unusually promising one. Its members turned in more ms. than any previous group. The Conference at Clerk that Bill is co-directing also required much more of his time. And to top it all New England experienced one of the most miserable winter-in-springs on record. More than three feet of snow dumped on us in the month of April, our fruit trees were nipped in an exceptionally severe late frost. Our garden, now a month late, is growing lushly in the hot, muggy days alternating with dry and cloudless sunshine. Nature has been violent and over-generous with cold, rain and nearly everything but sunny skies.

Elva's poetry programs and published poems have followed each other with excellent regularity. Bill though rushed, has managed to acquire almost a dozen acceptances since December. Mostly odd-moment fillers for C. S. MONITOR, but also articles and book reviews for CHILD SECURITY, THE NEW REVIEW, etc. In future months others are scheduled, and his desk drawers hold others in various degrees of completion.

Billy is busy with many projects: playing baseball, bat boy for the Town team, stamp-collecting. One of his pictures was exhibited at the Fitchburg Art Museum with those of others who placed within the first 125 students out of 200 enrolled in the various Friday and Saturday classes. A new member of our family as I write is Squeaky, a baby squirrel, whom Billy rescued from Midgey IV, our cat. Billy built a cage for him in the sun-room, where he is eyed askance by Midgey and Mr. Chips, our honey-colored cocker spaniel, a very frolicsome, but also sedate and serious-minded guardian of our acre.

VOICES, Harold Vinal, Box C, Vinalhaven, Me., is in need of 35 sponsors at \$35 each, in order to "continue through 1956," according to a special slip enclosed in the present (May-Aug.) issue. It publishes about 40 poems, together with book reviews and articles. This the 35th year.

REWRITE

HOT'S YOUR BATTING AVERAGE?

Doris Ricker Marston

Articles: DON EAST, NEW ENGLAND HOME.

Hylah R. Bender

Poems: AM. BARD, IDEALS, CANDOR, E. C. STAR, E. C. KANSAS, Midwest Chapparral and Johnson County HERALD.

Rebecca Phillips

Article: May issue of CONQUEST.

Edward P. Fogg

Article: N. E. HOME.

Hazel Corbeill

Articles: F. T. D. NEWS, F. D. S. SPIRIT & BUYER'S GUIDE, HOMEMAKER.

Belle S. Mooney

Poems: WESTMINSTER, CHROMATONES, SCIMITAR, REFLECTIONS, etc.

Helen Langworthy

Short Stories: CALLING ALL GIRLS, YOUTH
Articles: C. A. G. (above), Grand Rapids PRESS. Story: TEENS, FRONT RANK.

Shelton McKean

Article: Journal of LIFE TIME LIVING.

Helen McCarthy

Articles: FAMILY DIGEST, PILOT (Boston).

Mary Taylor

Story: JUNIORS.

Quentin R. Howard

Fillers: C. S. MONITOR

NEWS OF THE WCS FAMILY

Horace Maynard Finney's modern translation of Ibsen's "Peer Gynt" has been attracting a favorable press.

Jennie Palen, winner of an American Poetry League prize subscription to REWRITE, has recently published a technical book through Prentice-Hall, has sold a number of poems & articles, and has won several important poetry prizes.

Helen McCarthy is working on a second Vision Book ms. for Sheila Cudshy (Farrar Straus & Cudshy). Her first is to be published this fall. Miss Cudshy thought up the recently established Catholic Youth Book Club, Mineola, N. Y. You will find both Miss Cudshy and the Club described in the June ST. JOSEPH Magazine.

THE LINK, Rev. Joseph C. Dana, 122 Maryland Ave., N. E., Washington 2, D.C. states as editor he is leaving this "program magazine for the united fellowship of Protestants, so no materials will be accepted, regardless of merit, before Oct. 15th." But they want writers to know it, and submit mss. later.

IS THERE STILL A SPRING IN YOUR WALK?

A successful agent told us recently something that we also have experienced. "I have one recurring problem in agency: the number of elderly people who have introductions to me from friends or editors. While I realize how much they would like to become writers, unless they have a genuine, a latent talent, they can rarely be trained after, say the 55 year mark. This is particularly true of retired businessmen!

"Most of my advice to beginning writers, if they have no particular bent toward fiction, is to try short articles on subjects of general interest, or to attempt biography."

I feel especially concerned about this idea because unlike an agent, we cannot just say "No." If we possibly can, we have to do something to help these writers to translate their dreams into some kind of reality. And it is a sad fact that no one can just "make success" for would-be writers. There must be a core of talent on which to build. It requires imagination, too. The writer must in his heart see and feel the needs of the editor and have the capacity to adapt his material to meet this need.

What this agent is saying is that a writer must be able to summon up a quality that we call flexibility or fluency. Almost every child has this adaptability because the universal problem of childhood is getting to know what is expected of it and trying to be like the adults he or she lives with. Children do not have mature minds, and they are unable to master muscle skills and co-ordination. But they are well tuned to suggestibility that promises fun and a game. That's why many of them have striking abilities in the arts. Their long suit is imagination & they are keenly observant. They see things, not merely with their eyes, but with their emotions. They thus see them as they are, not as they think they ought to be, or as they, in later years, have been misled to believe them to appear.

Children then have that emotional "juice," intellectual and emotional fluency that the adults lose or simply have not got, as they grow older. Unless these older people can regain some of that juvenile ability to "imitate", learning to write or practice any of the arts is a pretty grim and terrifying avocation. What our agent friend is actually saying is that businessmen and others among the elderly have acquired a dreadful prosey or factual ability to appraise the world of every day. They cannot let down their hair, and dance. They must always conform to rigid conventions. Yet they cannot write if they do.

Writing is an ability to look at life and comment upon it, be thrilled, pleased or excited by it. But one can stay young & write.

REWRITE

PRIZE CONTESTS OPEN TO WRITERS

Corn Stock Theater, Peoria, Ill., offers a \$100 prize and 5 honorable mentions for the best plays in prose or verse adaptable to an in-the-round presentation. This is a chartered non-profit amateur group producing four one-act plays a season in a city park theater and sponsored by the Peoria Park Board. This is its second year. It is experimental in its aims. Competition closes: July 15th, with winners to be announced by Sept. 30th.

Idea: keep a file of prize deadlines.

Borestone Poetry Awards, Box 388, Occidental College, Los Angeles 41, Cal. Mass. or book entries. Not more than 30 poems or 60 to 70 pages. Closes: July 1st.

Houghton Mifflin Co., 2 Park St., Boston 7, Mass. Literary Fellowships of \$2,400 are offered annually for fiction & non-fiction.

READER'S DIGEST, Pleasantville, N. Y. offers large and small filler prizes for separate dep'ts. Consult a current issue.

FARM JOURNAL, Washington Squ. Phila. 5, Pa., and its companion TOWN JOURNAL, offer filler prizes for various dep'ts. Consult.

CATHOLIC DIGEST, Paul Bussard, 2959 North Hamline Ave., St. Paul 13, Minn., offers in each issue prizes in several filler dep'ts. Most issues use only reprinted features.

Christian Science MONITOR, 1 Norway St., Boston 15, Mass., uses several fillers on a regular daily Family Features page. Accepts contributions on other pages. Study carefully for several weeks for variety of content.

These are only a few of the many markets, which use fillers and are a good field open to free lance writers. You can develop many others if you keep a sharp eye. REWRITE always welcomes accurate, timely reports from members of the WCS Family on new and satisfactory markets.

Harriet Wolf, literary agent, has now associated her business with McIntosh & Otis, Inc. Address: 18 East 41st St., NYC 17.

A reputable non-advertising agent told me recently she has taken on a writer from the South. He formerly was represented by an advertised critic-agent. His reason for changing is interesting. He resented being charged a reading fee on a book ms. on which the critic-agent secured a sale and will reap a commission. Some firms do this; others credit the fee, if they get the commission. But the better type non-advertising agents concentrate on selling. Their business is your business. They don't mix two radically different professions, and therefore never try to criticize a ms. for a reading fee. If an agent does this, be wary of him as an agent.

A THOUGHTFUL EDITOR SUGGESTS

CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE, T. Otto Nall, 740 No. Rush St., Chicago 11, Ill. A hard market because it accepts about 1 ms. in 50 submitted. Lay readers predominate, so human interest pieces are favored. Little fiction, and only short stories. Re: poetry, usually overstocked, "continually on the lookout for seasonal poetry, submitted several months in advance."

On the back of its rejection slip CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE makes two good points:

- (1) "Have you begun, continued and finished up with the reader and his interests & needs rather than started with the writer and his message."
- (2) "Have you used first-hand experiences—your own—instead of drawing on compilation or quotations, if you are doing feature writing? If you are writing fiction, have you set up a story problem and then developed plot & your characterizations to show that character, and not chance, solves that problem?"

HORIZONS, A. Stauffer Curry, Brethren Publishing House, 16 So. State St., Elgin, Ill., is a small 8-page weekly S. S. paper. Issue I saw used a 4-part serial, editorial that was staff-written, an article about 4H in Ecuador, an article about Scotch hymns by our friend, Rebecca Phillips, another piece about "Banyan Tree Mission", a problems discussion, and a National Safety Council cartoon. A limited market, but an open one.

MERCURY PUBLICATIONS, 527 Madison Ave., NYC 22. New address.

John Scott Mabon is now managing editor of David McKay Co., 55 5th Ave., NYC 3. He had been an editorial advisor.

Marjorie Thayer is the editor of Prentice-Hall's recently formed juvenile department. 70 5th Ave., NYC 11.

Herman Wouk dug a story out of the hurricane warning system operated by the Navy and Elliot Arnold got another out of air rescue service, a world-wide project of the US Air Force. Both will be published as books then filmed.

Not everyone can get access to such military services, but these two ideas point up a method for free lance feature writers and story-tellers. Often you can find a valuable news source that has not been exploited lying around waiting for you to pick it up. Be always on the alert.

And don't forget that controversial books or books with local news angles are not for sure exploited by the publisher's public relations man, or a smart newspaper editor. A chance lies there for you. Go to it.

SINGLE VIEWPOINT OR MULTIPLE?

The primary argument for not changing the viewpoint in short stories, and maintaining a consistently single line of interest in an article is unity. Readers want to identify, to experience a story as if it were happening to them. In the article field they wish to feel as if they were right on the scene. Therefore, you try to sharpen a story or an article so that the reader can absorb it as easily as possible.

When a story is told from several angles, it is more difficult to know who is the MC. Unless the author skillfully builds the main line of interest, so that each change to another viewpoint or angle of vision seems to advance the story and emphasize the underlying line of interest, the reader will begin to feel that he is being jerked around here and there.

There is such a thing as a multiple viewpoint story. But very few inexperienced authors know how to use it effectively. For most of them the multiple viewpoint is only an open admission of weak technical skill—an inability to handle several facets of the story line or characterization. That is why many editors refuse to consider the multiple viewpoint story at all. Or if they pick one up occasionally, do so because they believe it will be a novelty.

The skilled professional author can usually accomplish the same impact by making the MC experience the story subjectively and at the same time view the characters around him objectively. This means that we can see all of the characters speak and act. But we can only go inside the MC. We can know his feelings as if they were our own.

ings as if they were our own. But regarding all of the other characters, we can only imagine & interpret how they feel from whatever they do or say. In other words we view the MC both externally and internally & the other characters only externally. That's the way it is in real life.

When we permit the reader to go inside all of the characters or more than one, we tell him in effect that this is not real life, only a story. When we do that we have to be a good story-teller. We have to tell the story so well the reader will want to hear it, whether it is false or not. Its magic inevitably must reach out and hold him helpless. More than that, we must take full advantage of the special virtues of a story: its power to move and fill the mind of one spectator; and to light up the imagination with words; the ability it gives one to look beneath the surface and to probe, or to understand compassionately, must be both apparent and appealing. The reader must be willing to surrender himself for a little while to an illusion of reality that can and should seem, as he views it, more real than life itself.

THIS CANNOT BE SAID TOO OFTEN

Whether you are trying to hit a big slick or an obscure little experimental magazine, you should always "study the book" and hard before you try to contribute. Every editor has his special requirements. If you do not follow these, you are almost sure to rate a rejection automatically. But you may be doing a subject he's just handled. And how is it possible for you to write in his general style if you are not very familiar with his magazine? Study the book! Pick his brains! And then satisfy him, but be original along the lines your research and careful analysis of the market suggests.

WHY MANY MSS. COME HOME

The two most common rejection factors the inexperienced writer allows to creep into a large number of his mss., are length and an ever-changing viewpoint. Both defects are a result of failure to observe the prevailing commercial pattern. Most articles today are rather short, even in the big slicks. Short stories rarely run over 5,000 words. A few of the slicks use that length, but they also print shorter ones. And 5,000 words form no part of the smaller magazine's budget.

Although there have been many changes over the years, agents have told me repeatedly for years that 3,000 words is the practical length for writers, especially unknowns. This is because if it fails to sell upstairs to the slicks, it may go in the secondaries. And as for articles, if you are unknown and smart you will not run too much over a maximum length of 1,500 words. For the same idea of keeping a wide range of markets open.

Indiana Council for the Appreciation of Poetry, Clarence C. Adams, 7077 W. 24th Ave., Gary, Indiana, is planning a big program of awards, and other promotion of Poetry Day.. He and his wife, Marie, are founders of the State Committee. He is preparing a history, on a nation-wide basis, of Poetry Day. He's also vice-president of the American Poetry League, and so a good man to contact. Write to him for details of both. He's a member of the WCS Family.

QUICKSILVER, Grace Ross & Mabel M. Kuykendall, 4429 Foard St., Fort Worth 5, Texas, is a very attractively printed quarterly poetry magazine. Prizes in cash and also in subscriptions are offered as payment. A note, listing its requirements, appeared in a recent (Spring) issue, as follows:

"Lively social vision poetry, ballads, portraits, poems of all forms and subject matter are solicited. Poetic dramas not exceeding 125 lines or 10 minutes playing time in production are earnestly desired. Couplets, quatrains, and other short poems are always in demand. Payment in prizes, and copies, of the magazine."

REWRITE

SUBSIDIZED BOOKS CAN HURT YOUR REPUTATION

Benn Hall Associates in the BHA Newsletter recently called attention to a new trend which they described as books for public relations. PUBLICITY RECORD compiled the list and also reportorially indicated the event. What is happening is that big business companies are telling their own story and hiring well known writers to write the books.. But instead of releasing them in the orthodox manner of the publishing trade, they're underwriting or subsidizing the cost. Thus they control all rights, do not enjoy usual royalties (the authors are in most instances paid a substantial flat sum), and can throw the books away free to customers, prospective new customers, stockholders, etc. These books are a deductible business expense the same as advertising, which in a disguised & subtly controlled manner, they actually are.

Bob Considine, for instance, having a radio sponsor in the insurance business, isn't going to be very critical of the fire insurance business. Robert J. Casey's "The Lackawanna Story" is certain to be quite impressed by the history and romance of that railroad. Interesting and informational as this kind of book often is, in the past it never has enjoyed any real sale in the free market of non-captive readers who put down money & actually buy books. Most of them usually appear in the "remainder house" lists shortly after publication. As do sadly enough a lot of books that legitimate publishers gamble, unwisely, upon and publish at their own expense. They're too obviously "publicity".

Most orthodox publishers, whose names may be found as sponsors of some of these books, are willing to list an occasional book of this kind provided it is done by a competent professional, and will be a prestige item. But no honest publisher will make a regular business of them; it tends to hurt the sale and reputation of his ordinary professional authors as well as their product. The public begins to suspect they are all trained seals who write primarily for the money that businessmen dole out to them.

This kind of assignment is nice money, but it is obviously not open to unknown writers or even to a good many experienced newspaper and magazine writers. For one of the publicity gimmicks the industrial tycoons wish to buy in this kind of a deal is the reader appeal value of such big name writers as Bob Considine, Robert J. Casey, Marquis James & Alec Waugh. to mention only a few. Moreover although the money is attractive, all these writers are keenly aware that it is paid to them simply because of their regular professional activities. They would be the first to see the folly of letting this kind of freelance by-product assume too large a spot in their crowded programs. If it did, they would know that they would be looking for work before a year or two had passed. They have to stay at the top and remain "big names."

The worst angle of this new trend as respects ordinary writers is the use that vanity publishers will make of it. It is fairly obvious again that this kind of subsidizing by the industrial firm desiring publicity, & willing to advertise its product indirectly, is very different from subsidization by unknown writers. The latter simply wish to bypass disinterested editors who hand out rejection slips. Even the college professor & university research scholar with a publishable book whose specialized appeal and small sale prevents it from being taken by a commercial publisher, is not in the same category as the unknown and often inexperienced writer with an overweening yen to break into print. They have a quality product.

Yet you can bet your bottom half dollar a lot of the vanity publishers, who will publish any book so long as the author has the necessary money to pay for a badly printed, shabbily promoted book, will seize upon the "books for public relations" as an indisputable proof that if big business can publish its books, you can, and make money! (Remember that big business does not expect to get a profit out of these books. It expects to lose money, but charge this up as advertising, and deduct it as a legitimate business expense, something you won't be able to do. The Internal Revenue Department is not likely to accept it, unless you can prove writing is a real professional occupation.

So don't be fooled in any way shape or manner that there is money in this deal unless you have the capacity and the reputation to sell your services to some firm such as the United States Steel Co. And remember that in business dealings it is better to be sought out rather than to seek. In the latter case you are always on the defensive, whereas if they come to you, you can to some extent at least control the terms.

TWO MARKET SUGGESTIONS

IDEALS, Van B. Hooper, Ideals Publishing 3510 West St. Paul Ave., Milwaukee, 1, Wis. A very beautifully printed bi-monthly which uses a lot of popular and rather light, but definitely inspirational verse. Also smaller amounts of prose. Some of each represent reprints. Operates on a fixed subject schedule drawn up many months in advance. Writers thus need to be familiar with the book, and know that the particular ideals selected for future publication are: Family (July 15th issue); Harvest (Sept. 15th); Christmas (Nov. 15th); and Friendship (Jan. 15, 1957). Dates refer to publication days. Contributions would be needed months before that.

Poetry Day, October 15th. Now is the time to be making your plans to capture some one or more of the numerous prizes being offered by state and national committees for the observance of this day. There are a lot of them.

REWRITE

WITH CONFIDENCE YOU CAN DO ANYTHING

Confidence, self-confidence, is an intangible thing. But it is one of the most vital elements in a writer's equipment. Any writer who has frequently sat down in front of a typewriter and faced a blank sheet of paper knows that. And no matter how experienced a professional you may be, you will find that every time you do go to your typewriter you will have to overcome that often imaginary, under-the-surface fear. At least until your lead is written to satisfy you.

Confidence, and the lack of it, feeds upon itself. Your mood of the day, your state of physical well-being has a lot to do with it. This can be a comforting thought & help you on occasion to fight down any quivering self-consciousness. But it can also develop and add to your nervousness, which increases in direct ratio to the importance of the assignment and the amount of money or prestige involved. If you have reason not to be self-confident, the little devils who enjoy plaguing your mind and emotions and filling your stomach with butterflies, will inevitably have a field day of fun.

This is no reason, however, to forego for a day writing the masterpiece you wanted to write. There are times when it is wise to be patient and admit that you are licked. But one of the fascinations of writing is that a good many of us recognize it as a disciplined and disciplining profession. Whether we stay at the desk and lick that old devil or go to our other tasks of getting ready to be a writer, we can take a quiet pride in facing our job with courage and pertinacity. A writer who meets his deadlines and makes an honest effort to control and direct his creative abilities, knows he has done a worthwhile project both for a day and across the years.

Not all the battle is fought inside, nevertheless. Writing is a lonely business but no one works entirely alone. You send out a ms., perhaps a lot of them. The element almost all of us call luck, but which could be something deeper and more mysterious, brings back an acceptance or rejection. Often the string of either seems unduly long. We have a streak when nothing we can do is wrong or right. Then is the time when it is easy, or takes fortitude to be a writer. It is probably best not to look at the mail until after one has finished his daily stint.

But luck and the stimulus of outside influences such as the mail or bothersome family and relatives, the telephone, etc., are not the troublesome, disturbing factors writers like to think they are, if one has character and perspective on his task. True, they can be upsetting, but they need not "throw" you if you face your deadlines sensibly and cultivate the ability to write comparatively well at all hours and under all kinds of

conditions. I learned to write pretty passable copy in a noisy, confusing city room. I also grew accustomed to very short times in which to meet deadlines. And to having editors and copy-boys carry away one's sheets of filled-in paper as fast as they emerge from the hot typewriter. It is a bit disconcerting to be uncertain what the last paragraph was about. But you can train yourself to write a grade of copy that critics may not consider literature, but which ordinary readers read and take the trouble to write in and admire.

A great deal of time is wasted talking about style. It is simply good writing plus ideas, talent & imaginative skill with words.

To let these outside stimuli affect you is basically to be on the defensive. If you're smart you can go on the offensive and force them to serve your purpose. Some writers go for years without a sale; they risk fame and fortune on a single type of writing. I admire such writers greatly and often wonder, when speculating about this and that, how a man or woman can keep his or her morale up, under these conditions. I have always felt, and have advocated it in my teaching, that a happier and healthier way is to seek to be a moderately good writer in several lines. To discover that the fundamentals are basically the same in all types of writing.

This is very comforting, but it also lets one get a chance to make a few sales as one goes forward. Often a sale now and then has an invigorating effect. It also helps you to gauge your effect on readers and check your technical progress. I believe a writer able to set himself successfully for many differing types of readers, gains an added fluency and an inner strength that shows in what he writes. Certainly it teaches him the wider vision that tends to make him a writer of the world, who knows how to give his material a universal appeal and deeper meaning.

There are a number of things one can do to build his own confidence, and it is vitally important to think about this, because without a continuing sense of self-importance a writer simply cannot write good copy. Best idea of course is to be so enthusiastic regarding your story, and be so full of it, it is no problem to write well about it. Another trick is to organize it so carefully you have no qualms about writing it. I always try to block out any piece of writing night before I intend to write it, then get a good night's sleep and let my subconscious think about it. I'm one of those persons who are at their best in the morning. So I begin to develop my lead while I shave. A lot of ideas fall into place, and by the time I reach my desk I have built up a head of steam, & have overcome most of my anxiety. I know I have got the lead under control. I never worry a great deal beyond that. Finally, knowing the market I'm writing for and the style "they" use thoroughly, I am comfortably "set".